

Floods

Believe it or not, floods are the most damaging, costly, and deadly weather-related phenomena. Each year, they cost the U.S. over \$2 billion in property damage and cause roughly 150 deaths.

All of Alabama is vulnerable to floods anytime of the year. Due to Alabama's close proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, the state has an almost unlimited supply of moisture available. When low pressure systems move into the area and combine with this moisture, the resulting rains can be heavy and produce floods. Also, slow-moving summertime thunderstorms can produce flooding rains in a very short period of time.



Vestavia (Jefferson County), July 14, 2005



Mobile (Mobile County), August 29, 2005



Catoma Creek (Montgomery County), March 28, 2005

Flash Flood

Flash floods can occur within a few minutes or hours of heavy rainfall or from a dam or levee failure. These floods can destroy structures, down trees, roll boulders, and create new waterways. Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more! Furthermore, flash flood producing rains can also trigger catastrophic mudslides. You may not always have a warning of these sudden and deadly floods.

Urban Flood

Floods can be magnified in urban areas. As land is converted from fields and woodlands to roads and parking lots, it loses its ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization increases runoff two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain. During periods of urban flooding, streets can become swift moving rivers, while basements can become death traps as they fill with water.

River Flood

River floods are a natural and inevitable part of life in Alabama. Low lying areas near rivers, streams, lakes, and reservoirs are susceptible to river floods. Some river floods occur seasonally when winter or spring rains fill river basins with too much water too quickly. Others can occur from slow-moving low pressure systems. Torrential rains from decaying hurricanes or tropical systems can also produce river floods.